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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000069

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ELAB](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY MINORITY LEADER ECHOES CALLS FOR  
NATIONAL DIALOGUE

REF: A. CONAKRY 0007

[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0010

[1](#)C. CONAKRY 0029

[1](#)D. CONAKRY 0020

[1](#)E. CONAKRY 0046

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The leader of the opposition minority at the National Assembly told Poloff that failure to monitor the effective implementation of the January 27 Accords is at the heart of Guinea,s current political situation. Echoing another opposition party leader (septel), contact said that a national forum for dialogue is important. However, he seemed uncertain as to what would happen once the various stakeholders decide what they want to accomplish since it will likely involve pressuring the presidency to step back.  
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) On January 23, Poloff met with Ousmane Bah, president of the Union for Progress and Renewal (UPR) at his office at the Guinean National Assembly. The UPR is the only opposition party represented at the National Assembly, holding 20 of 114 legislative seats.

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FAILURE TO MONITOR THE ACCORDS  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) In regards to Guinea,s current political tension, which had unions threatening to resume a nationwide strike on January 10 (reftels), Bah said that failure to adhere to the January 27 Accords is a fundamental contributing problem to the overall political situation. According to Bah, the Guinean Government, represented both by the president and the prime minister, has failed to respect the Accords, but at the same time, civil political actors have failed to hold them responsible. Bah said that everyone wants to avoid a repeat of the violence of early 2007 and that labor strikes have become synonymous with violence. Once started, it is difficult to manage a strike and that is why it is important to have dialogue,, he said.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Bah noted that as members of the National Assembly, the UPR will be represented on the Committee de Suivi, which is being established as a mechanism to review the application of the January 27 Accords (reftel E). He said that the Watchdog Committee (reftel D) will also be involved, but it is more of a moral entity, representing religious interests. When asked to define the role of the committees, Bah said that in general, the Committee de Suivi is supposed to promote the application of the Accords. But the big question,, Bah said, is what will happen if the

committee,s recommendations are not accepted.,

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WE NEED A NATIONAL FORUM FOR DIALOGUE  
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15. (C) Having just come from a meeting of all the opposition parties where possible political strategies were discussed, Bah said that a national roundtable is needed in order to develop a platform for exiting the crisis., He said that a period of political transition is needed, but the idea of a political transition brings up several questions. Bah noted that the country is governed by a president with broad constitutional powers so if people are talking about a political transition, one needs to consider how it will be done and by whom. Bah then asked rhetorically what event is going to create a transition? We are in a situation of confusion., According to Bah, a national dialogue would enable stakeholders to develop a communal platform with a concrete proposal to offer to the president. We have nothing to use but our voices,, he added.

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ELECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TOO  
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16. (C) Turning to Guinea,s delayed legislative elections, Bah said that the elections are an important element in the overall political picture. However, Bah was skeptical as to how transparent elections might be, saying I have a lot of faith in the National Electoral Commission, but I cannot call it independent because I have not yet seen whether it is truly independent or not., Bah said that progress towards transparent elections could help alleviate political tensions, but said that there is still a high potential for

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fraud. He noted that the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) is still well represented in Guinea,s interior, especially within the central administration at the sous-prefectoral level. The PUP is not dead,, he said, and the old mentalities are still very active., Bah said that the Guinean Diaspora vote could be very important since there are more than two million Guineans living overseas, but that there is currently no mechanism for absentee voting. Bah emphasized that we must have elections and I hope that these elections are a little more credible (than those of the past).,

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LABOR UNIONS ARE REACHING OUT  
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17. (SBU) Bah also commented briefly on the labor unions, noting that the political parties are scheduled to meet with them the week of February 1. He said that the unions have been unavailable to meet with the political parties for many months and perhaps now that they have seen that they didn,t have support for the strike, they may be acknowledging limits to their political influence.

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COMMENT  
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18. (C) Although Bah was friendly and willing to exchange ideas, he was reserved and appeared to carefully weigh his words before speaking. He was reluctant to speculate directly on possible political developments over the next few months. However, by posing a number of critical rhetorical questions, Bah may have been indirectly commenting on the overall political uncertainty. He seemed committed to dialogue and avoiding political violence, but at the same time, genuinely perplexed as to what might happen after various actors decide on a common strategy. Although much more cautious than his colleague from the Union Force

Republican party, Sidya Toure (septel), Bah seemed to be  
sending the same basic message ) everyone needs to talk and  
decide on a national platform for political transition...and  
then propose it to the president and see what happens. END  
COMMENT.  
CARTER